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Food and Nutrition NEWS

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT...

More Stamps

RESULTING FROM FOOD STAMP PROGRAM CHANGES are impressive participation and increased benefits to low-income families in those areas which inaugurated changes in January and February. Participants in these areas are paying less money and receiving more food stamps. In a sampling of 48 areas where the modified plan went into operation in February, participation increased more than 27 percent from January with the value of bonus stamps issued per-person up 124 percent. The number of new applications for food stamps is setting records throughout the country.

More Areas

TWELVE COUNTIES in seven States were just designated for the Food Stamp Program. These areas will make food stamps available to low income families as soon as appropriate local arrangements are completed. Eleven of the 12 counties have had no USDA food-aid program for needy families; one has already utilized USDA family food donations on a partial or limited basis. The various counties are located in these states: Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Virginia.

Food Certificates

THE PILOT FOOD CERTIFICATE PROGRAM for mothers and infants began February 2 on the South Side of Chicago, where, as of March 20, some 1,382 people--including 229 expectant mothers, 601 infants and 552 mothers--are participating. The pilot program is testing the feasibility of giving mothers, infants, and expectant mothers food certificates for buying milk, infant formula and infant cereal at retail stores instead of distributing selected food items directly to certified participants. A second pilot project will open April 1 in Yakima County, Washington, and a third in Bibb County, Georgia, on May 1. Pilot projects are also being developed in the Northeast, and Southwest areas of the Nation.

School Meals

REVITALIZED INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROVIDING SCHOOL MEALS were issued recently by USDA to insure that all needy children are provided meals on a consistent basis in schools and other group activities for children within each State. These new instructions will provide a more detailed method of collecting children's payments and accounting for the free and reduced price meals, and will protect the anonymity of needy children. Also, State educational agencies and regional FNS offices will issue family size and income scales to be used as minimum criteria by local school authorities and service institutions for deciding which children get free and reduced price meals.

AROUND THE NATION...

BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS. Older folks come back to school for lunch in Brookline and 9 other Massachusetts communities, as part of a new and growing program to provide nutritious noon meals for the elderly in school lunchrooms, with special authorization of the Massachusetts State legislature. USDA-donated foods and funds from the State Commission on Aging help to underwrite the cost of the meals, for which the elderly pay 50 cents. For some it is their only decent meal of the day, and for everyone a real event--a chance to socialize with their contemporaries, enjoy entertainment, and learn about community services they may need.

GARY, INDIANA. The John Will Anderson Boys' Club, in a low-income area of Gary, has many members who were not eating properly. Before the Club started its food service program, many of the boys would come there from school, stay until closing with perhaps a dime for a candy bar or a bag of potato chips. Now, on school days, the 6 to 18-year-old youngsters can get a nutritious supper, and on Saturdays and during school vacations, a good lunch for a nominal 20 cents a meal. The Club also serves a between meal supplement for 5 cents. USDA's Special Food Service Program initially supplied funds to help buy kitchen equipment, and, on a continuing basis, provides cash and donated foods to help the Boys' Club hold costs down. Volunteer help makes a substantial contribution too.

INDIANAPOLIS scored a major breakthrough to get school lunches to children in typical core city situations by developing a central kitchen to serve several surrounding schools. The city received \$125,000 to buy necessary kitchen equipment from USDA's Nonfood Assistance Program. The School Board bought a suitable central kitchen building which had been a soft drink bottling plant. The owner sold the building to the school system for about 15 percent of real value. The

central kitchen is geared to serve at least 27 schools with lunches for about 15,000 children.

THE SHIPROCK, NEW MEXICO, Nursery School provides care and feeding--2 meals and a snack daily--for 50-75 Navajo children while their mothers work. It's a retirement dream come true for ex-building contractor Jay DeGraff and his wife who put their own money, time, and effort into development and operation of the Shiprock Nursery School, with the participation of the Indian community, and help from government agencies, including USDA's Special Food Service Program. Money from this special program "really saved us," said Mrs. DeGraff. "We could not have fed the children adequately and kept the tuition as low as it is." Tuition for a five-day week is \$8.50 for one child in a family, \$7.50 for the second and \$5.00 for the third.

THE NAVAJO TRIBAL COUNCIL and the U.S. Department of Agriculture signed an agreement to provide specially selected supplemental foods for mothers and children who receive medical care at U.S. Public Health Service facilities at Gallup, Tohatchi, Shiprock, and Crownpoint, New Mexico, beginning April 1. Under the program, USDA will deliver such foods as canned juices, canned vegetables, milk, enriched farina, canned meat and peanut butter, to the Navajo Council. Then the Council assumes control of the foods and is responsible for storage and distribution. The agreement is like those now existing between USDA and state governments. The Supplemental Food Program operates independently from family food assistance programs, school lunch, school breakfast and other USDA food programs.

A CONTRACT was awarded to Service Systems Corporation (a subsidiary of Del Monte Corp.) by the Buffalo, New York, Board of Education, for providing 6,000 to 9,000 packaged school lunches every day in low income areas, starting March 9. A hot meal is served every third day. The contract which covers the remainder of the school year enables 20 inner-city

schools to take part in the National School Lunch Program for the first time.

TOWARD A SCHOOL BREAKFAST GOAL of reaching 500,000 children throughout the nation this year, Harrison Elementary School of the District of Columbia is serving 275 each day. This school has no food preparation facilities and yet it has been providing breakfast service for two years. Especially helpful and nutritious on cold winter days is the instant hot oatmeal which is available in three flavors--maple, raisin-spice, and apple-cinnamon. For preparation, only hot water, bowls, and spoons are required.

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE...

IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, radio station WSB and the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs conducted a special fund raising campaign that brought in over \$20,000 to help Georgia schools provide lunches to the needy.

ALSO IN ATLANTA, volunteer workers with Economic Opportunity help distribute application cards for free and reduced price school lunches and follow-up with the families to help see that needy children are enrolled in the program.

NON-GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND VOLUNTEER GROUPS coordinated with the San Diego Welfare Department and USDA and established food aid programs. Instrumental in this effort were the Salvation Army, Methodist Ministry to the Metropolis, Neighborhood House Association, and the Greater Parish Ministry of the Presbyterian Church. USDA has provided the donated food and voluntary agencies set up and staffed neighborhood distribution centers that serve San Diego county low-income residents. The county government has worked closely with the volunteer groups since the program began in March 1969. During the early months of the program, some county welfare employees volunteered their time during lunch hours. Now some of the non-government agencies are hiring full and part time employees from among the low-income families.

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS...

WHY CAN'T WELFARE FAMILIES HAVE THE FOOD STAMP PURCHASE REQUIREMENT DEDUCTED FROM THEIR WELFARE CHECKS?

This is not now permitted under the Federal statutes governing the federally-aided public assistance programs. The Administration's proposals for changes in the Food Stamp Act include a proposal to legalize such a deduction system, but it would be an elective, not a mandatory, requirement for the public assistance family.

WHO DECIDES WHERE AND HOW FOOD STAMPS WILL BE ISSUED?

States and/or localities make these decisions. Under the current Food Stamp Act, they are responsible for making the issuance arrangements and paying issuance costs. There is no single "best" way to issue coupons--the "best" system is the one that best meets the needs of eligible families--and the "best" way may well include a combination of several different arrangements.

WHY WON'T THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE LET STAMPS BE ISSUED THROUGH THE MAILS?

States and localities have always been able to issue stamps through the mail--even under the pilot program operated between 1961-1964. In July 1968 USDA changed its regulations to accept the financial loss of any coupons "lost in the mails" provided States undertook reasonable precautions to minimize such losses, e.g., use first-class postage to mail the stamps.

Mailing coupons, however, is not a panacea; it is not the sole answer to facilitating issuance services. The family must mail its purchase requirement to the issuance office, for example. But, mailing coupons can be of help--to some who live in isolated areas or some who are housebound.

COULD MACARONI BE ADDED TO THE LIST OF DONATED FOODS?

The Commodity Distribution Program just introduced enriched macaroni to the USDA-donated foods available to

low-income families. A special study of recipient families in New York, St. Louis and San Diego showed high acceptance of two types of macaroni--one fortified with soy flour and the other with milk--both enriched with vitamins and minerals.

THE SCORECARD...

FAMILY FOOD HELP, in food stamps or donated foods is reaching around 7.7 million people, according to latest reports for January 1970. Some 3.9 million people were getting donated foods, while 3.8 were using food stamps.

SO THAT ALL MAY SHARE, the number of counties without family food help or plans to provide food stamps or donated foods has, as of March 27, been reduced to 188 (including about two percent of the total U.S. population). Last May 6,--when the figure was 432 counties--the President, in a special message to Congress, pledged that by June 30, 1970, all 3,129 counties and independent cities in the U.S. would provide either food stamps or donated foods for their low-income families. When the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health, opened in early December, some 307 counties and independent cities were still without plans for family food help.

AT LEAST ONE GOOD MEAL A DAY. That's what the National School Lunch Program aims to provide for 6.6 million needy American school children by next Thanksgiving. By early 1970--with growing support and resources at Federal, State and local levels--the lunch program was already providing free or reduced price lunches to 4.5 million youngsters unable to pay the regular price. That leaves over 2 million school children still to be fed, mostly in old kitchenless schools

in crowded urban ghettos. Increased funds, new technology and management techniques will get the job done.

\$30 MILLION MORE TO FEED SCHOOL CHILDREN. USDA requested and Congress approved \$30 million more to continue school food programs for needy during the remainder of fiscal year 1970. Over half of the States need more money, and this action will assure them that their programs for needy youngsters will continue. Other States that have program expansion underway will be able to share additional funds as needed. Some representative States and their indications of need to provide more lunch and breakfast programs for children from low-income families are Alabama--\$1.2 million; Florida--\$1.9 million; Georgia--\$2.7 million; Illinois--\$4 million; New York--\$5.3 million; Oklahoma--\$1.1 million; and West Virginia--\$1.8 million.

INFO AND EDUCATION...

NEW PAMPHLETS:

SPANISH-ENGLISH LEAFLET is to help food stamp users. "You and Food Stamps," FNS-5, explains to low-income families, in both Spanish and English, how to take part in and get greater benefits from the Food Stamp Program.

THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, PA-930.

Revised, describes the program and how it works, for the general public.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS, PA-948.

Colorful illustrated brochure describes the school lunch, breakfast, milk and special food service programs.

Inquiries and requests for publications may be addressed to the Food and Nutrition Service Information Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.